



DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

Coast Guard

33 CFR Part 117

[Docket No. USCG-2020-0694]

Drawbridge Operation Regulation; Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, Madeira Beach FL

AGENCY: Coast Guard, DHS.

ACTION: Notice of temporary deviation from regulations; request for comments.

SUMMARY: The Coast Guard has issued a temporary deviation from the operating schedule that governs the Welch Causeway (SR 699) Bridge, mile 122.8 at Madeira Beach, Florida. A request was made to place the drawbridge on a daily operating schedule to alleviate vehicle congestion due to on demand bridge openings. This deviation will test a change to the drawbridge operation schedule to determine whether a permanent change to the schedule is needed. The Coast Guard is seeking comments from the public regarding these proposed changes.

DATES: This deviation is effective from 12:01 a.m. on January 1, 2021 through 11:59 p.m. on June 25, 2021

Comments and relate material must reach the Coast Guard on or before February 25, 2021.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments identified by docket umber USCG-2020-0694 using Federal eRulemaking Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>.

See the “Public Participation and Request for Comments” portion of the SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION section below for instructions on submitting comments.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: If you have questions on this test deviation, call or e-mail LT Clark W. Sanford, U.S. Coast Guard, Sector Saint Petersburg Waterways Management Division; telephone 727-824-7506, e-mail Clark.W.Sanford@uscg.mil.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

I. Background, Purpose and Legal Basis

The Welch Causeway (SR699) Bridge across the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway, mile 122.8, at Madeira Beach, Florida is a double-leaf bascule bridge with a 25 foot vertical clearance at mean high water in the closed position and an 89 foot horizontal clearance between fenders. The normal operating schedule for the bridge is found in 33 CFR 117.287(h). Navigation on the waterway is commercial and recreational.

The City of Madeira Beach Florida has requested the current operating schedule be modified due to the increased economic growth, vehicle traffic in the area as well as a school located in close proximity to the bridge. The City of Madeira Beach requested the bridge operation logs from the bridge owner, Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) to validate the need for a regulation change. The Coast Guard has reviewed these logs as well and determined a test deviation is needed before proceeding with a rule change for the operation of this bridge.

Under this test deviation, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., the draw shall open on the hour and half-hour; except Federal Holidays and at all other times, the draw shall operate on demand.

The Coast Guard will also inform the users of the waterways through our Local and Broadcast Notices to Mariners of the change in operating schedule for the bridge so that vessel operators can arrange their transits to minimize any impact caused by the temporary deviation.

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In accordance with 33 CFR 117.35(e), the drawbridge must return to its regular operating schedule immediately at the end of the effective period of this temporary deviation. This deviation from the operating regulations is authorized under 33 CFR 117.35.

II. Public Participation and Request for Comments

We view public participation as essential to effective rulemaking, and will consider all comments and material received during the comment period. Your comment can help shape the outcome of this rulemaking. If you submit a comment, please include the docket number for this rulemaking, indicate the specific section of this document to which each comment applies, and provide a reason for each suggestion or recommendation.

We encourage you to submit comments through the Federal eRulemaking Portal at <https://www.regulations.gov>. If your material cannot be submitted using <https://www.regulations.gov>, contact the person in the FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT section of this document for alternate instructions.

We accept anonymous comments. All comments received will be posted without change to <https://www.regulations.gov> and will include any personal information you have provided. For more about privacy and submissions in response to this document, see DHS's eRulemaking System of Records notice (85 FR 14226, March 11, 2020).

Documents mentioned in this notification as being available in this docket and all public comments, will be in our online docket at <https://www.regulations.gov> and can be viewed by following that website's instructions. Additionally, if you go to the online

docket and sign up for email alerts, you will be notified when comments are posted or a final rule is published.

Dated: December 2, 2020.

Randall D. Overton,
Director, Bridge Administration,
Seventh Coast Guard District.

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